

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 26-29, cancel claim 33, and add new claims 34-45, leaving the following claims 26-32 and 34-45 pending. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for servicing patrons, wherein a queue is managed by a queue manager of a computer system, wherein said queue manager comprises software running on said computer system configured to perform the following:

receiving, by a queue manager executing on one or more processors of the computer system, a queue entry request from a first patron, wherein said queue entry request comprises patron-supplied personal contact information, wherein said queue entry request further comprises a notification position in said queue at which the first patron is to be notified and a number of patrons in a party of the first patron;

placing, by the queue manager, said first patron at a next available position in said queue;

selecting, by the queue manager, another, different patron to be served from said queue, wherein the another patron is selected based on position of the another patron in said queue and data provided in said queue entry request of the another patron;

updating, by the queue manager, a position of said first patron in said queue when the another patron in said queue has been served;

estimating, by the queue manager, a time remaining until said first patron will be served based on historical data corresponding to serving groups of a same size as the party of the first patron; and

notifying, by the queue manager, said first patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching said notification position in

said queue at which said first patron is to be notified, of a current position of said first patron in said queue and an indication of the estimated time remaining until an estimate time at which said first patron will be served.

27. (Currently Amended) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 26, wherein said queue manager further performs the following:
notifying, by the queue manager, said patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching a said top position in said queue, that said patron is ready to be served; and
starting, by the queue manager, a timer to count a first duration of time after said patron is notified that said patron is ready to be served.
28. (Currently Amended) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 27, wherein said queue manager further performs the following:
dequeuing, by the queue manager, said patron from said queue if said patron responds to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.
29. (Currently Amended) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 27, wherein said queue manager further performs the following:
placing, by the queue manager, said patron at an end of said queue if said patron does not respond to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.
30. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 26, wherein said queue entry request is received via electronic mail.
31. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 26, wherein said queue entry request is received via a web page.
32. (Previously Presented) The computer implemented method as recited in claim 26, wherein said patron represents a party of more than one person, wherein a

position of said patron is swapped with a position of another patron if said patron's party cannot be accommodated.

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) A computer program product comprising a machine-accessible medium of a storage device containing instructions effective, when executing in a data processing system, to cause said data processing system to perform operations comprising:

receiving a queue entry request from a first patron, wherein said queue entry request comprises patron-supplied personal contact information, wherein said queue entry request further comprises a notification position in said queue at which the first patron is to be notified and a number of patrons in a party of the first patron;

placing said first patron at a next available position in said queue;

selecting another, different patron to be served from said queue, wherein the another patron is selected based on position of the another patron in said queue and data provided in said queue entry request of the another patron;

updating a position of said first patron in said queue when the another patron in said queue has been served;

estimating a time remaining until said first patron will be served based on historical data corresponding to serving groups of a same size as the party of the first patron; and

notifying said first patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching said notification position in said queue at which said first patron is to be notified, of a current position of said first patron in said queue and an indication of the estimated time remaining until said first patron will be served.

35. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 34, further comprising:

- notifying said patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching a top position in said queue, that said patron is ready to be served; and
- starting a timer to count a first duration of time after said patron is notified that said patron is ready to be served.
36. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 35, further comprising: dequeuing said patron from said queue if said patron responds to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.
37. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 35, further comprising: placing said patron at an end of said queue if said patron does not respond to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.
38. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 34, wherein said queue entry request is received via electronic mail.
39. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 34, wherein said queue entry request is received via a web page.
40. (New) The computer program product as recited in claim 34, wherein said patron represents a party of more than one person, wherein a position of said patron is swapped with a position of another patron if said patron's party cannot be accommodated.
41. (New) A data processing system having one or more processors to execute one or more program modules to perform operations to notify patrons, comprising: circuitry operable for receiving a queue entry request from a first patron, wherein said queue entry request comprises patron-supplied personal contact

information, wherein said queue entry request further comprises a notification position in said queue at which the first patron is to be notified and a number of patrons in a party of the first patron;
circuitry operable for placing said first patron at a next available position in said queue;
circuitry operable for selecting another, different patron to be served from said queue, wherein the another patron is selected based on position of the another patron in said queue and data provided in said queue entry request of the another patron;
circuitry operable for updating a position of said first patron in said queue when the another patron in said queue has been served;
circuitry operable for estimating a time remaining until said first patron will be served based on historical data corresponding to serving groups of a same size as the party of the first patron; and
circuitry operable for notifying said first patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching said notification position in said queue at which said first patron is to be notified, of a current position of said first patron in said queue and an indication of the estimated time remaining until said first patron will be served.

42. (New) The data processing system of claim 41, further comprising:
circuitry operable for notifying said patron, using said patron-supplied contact information, upon said patron reaching a top position in said queue, that said patron is ready to be served; and
circuitry operable for starting a timer to count a first duration of time after said patron is notified that said patron is ready to be served.
43. (New) The data processing system of claim 42, wherein said queue manager further performs the following:
circuitry operable for dequeuing said patron from said queue if said patron responds to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.

44. (New) The data processing system of claim 42, wherein said queue manager further performs the following:
circuitry operable for placing said patron at an end of said queue if said patron does not respond to said notification that said patron is ready to be served prior to an expiration of said first duration of time.
45. (New) The data processing system of claim 41, wherein said patron represents a party of more than one person, wherein a position of said patron is swapped with a position of another patron if said patron's party cannot be accommodated.